**Alternative energy**

energy derived from sources that do not use up natural resources or harm the environment

**Biodegradable**

If something is *biodegradable*, it can decompose naturally. When you're out camping, you shouldn't leave anything behind and certainly nothing that isn't *biodegradable*. A plastic bottle is the antithesis of *biodegradable* — it will be there forever.

**Biodiversity**

When you have a many different plants and animals living in one place, you have *biodiversity.* The Amazon rain forest is rich in *biodiversity*.

**Carbon cycle**

the organic circulation of carbon from the atmosphere into organisms and back again

**Conservation**

*Conservation* is when you keep something from running out — whether it's plants, animals, or resources. Your new *conservation* project, "Save the Pigeons," might not catch on as quickly as you'd hoped.

**Deforest**

remove the trees from

**Ecology**

The noun *ecology* describes the environment as it connects to living things, or the branch of biology that studies that environment.

**Ecosystem**

An *ecosystem* is all the living things, from plants and animals to microscopic organisms, that share an environment. Everything in an *ecosystem* has an important role. Well, almost everything.

**Environment**

Think of the *environment* as everything that is around you. A quiet room with good lighting and no distractions is a good *environment* for doing homework, or at least that's what your parents and teachers think.

**Habitat**

Your *habitat* is the environment you are accustomed to living in. Zoos usually try to mimic the *habitats* of the animals they keep, housing bats in a nocturnal house and monkeys in a cage with trees to climb and swing from.

**Litter**

If everyone decided to *litter*, or drop trash on the ground, the world would be covered in garbage. *Litter* doesn't always have to be trashy though. When a cat has kittens, they are born as a *litter*.

**Ozone**

*Ozone* is a colorless toxic gas formed from oxygen by an electrical discharge. It’s that stuff in the sky that comes between you and the sun.

**Ozone hole**

an area of the ozone layer (near the poles) that is seasonally depleted of ozone

**Ozone layer**

a layer in the stratosphere (at approximately 20 miles) that contains a concentration of ozone sufficient to block most ultraviolet radiation from the sun

**Pollution**

*Pollution* is unwanted, harmful stuff contaminating an environment. The race to develop clean energy is motivated by high levels of *pollution* that people fear are permanently damaging the earth's environment.

**Recyclable**

capable of being used again

**Renewable**

Anything *renewable* can be replaced or has an endless supply. *Renewable* sources of energy don't run out.

**Ecology Glossary**

**abiotic** - nonliving factors in the environment. The abiotic factors of the environment include light, temperature, soil, climate and atmospheric gases.

**biotic** - pertaining to life or living things.

**carnivore** - organism that eats meat for energy.

**consumer -** organism that consumes another organism as food for energy.

**community** - the region occupied by a group of interacting organisms

**decomposer -** organisms that breakdown organic material.

**ecology**- the study of how living (biotic) and nonliving (abiotic) parts of the environment interact with each other

**ecosystem** - a system formed by the interaction of a community of organisms with their physical environment.

**food chain -**An interconnected chain of organisms that indicate which are predators and which are prey in relation to one another.

**habitat** - the natural environment of a plant or animal.

**herbivore -** organisms that eat plants for energy.

**niche** - the ecological role of an organism in a community.

**omnivore -** organism that eats plants and meat for energy.

**organism -** any living thing that has living characteristics and is composed of one or more cells.

**population** - all the organisms that constitute a specific group or occur in a specified habitat.

**producer -** organisms that use the sun for producing food.

**species -** organisms that can reproduce with each other.